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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 HARARE 000974

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STATE PASS TO USAID FOR E. LOKEN AND L. DOBBINS
STATE PASS TO NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR B. PITTMAN

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [PHUM](#) [ZI](#)
SUBJECT: TSVANGIRAI BRIEFS AMBASSADOR ON SADC TROIKA
MEETING, REQUESTS ASSISTANCE

Classified By: Ambassador James D. McGee for reason 1.4 (d)

SUMMARY

11. (C) In an October 28 meeting with the Ambassador, MDC leader Morgan Tsvangirai briefed on the SADC Troika meeting which concluded in Harare in the early morning hours of the 28th. Tsvangirai expressed disappointment that SADC did not understand that the issue is not about allocation of ministries, but about a genuine sharing of power. Nevertheless, he is pointing to the SADC Extraordinary Summit within a couple of weeks. He asked U.S. assistance in demarching SADC capitals about the importance of the Summit. He also said it was important that AU regional leaders attend since the AU is a guarantor of the September 15 agreement. On sanctions, Tsvangirai said they had had their effect, and a rollout of new sanctions was not important. The one exception would be sanctions imposed against the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe--that could be a game changer. END SUMMARY.

12. (U) This message contains an action request. See paragraph 11.

Troika Meeting Disappointing

13. (C) Tsvangirai told the Ambassador that in its 13-hour meeting with ZANU-PF and the MDC in Harare on October 27, the SADC Troika (Organ on Politics, Defense, and Security) directed its attention at control of the contentious ministry of Home Affairs. They failed to understand, however, that the issue was not about allocation of ministries, but equitable distribution of ministries as a prerequisite for a genuine power-sharing agreement. A silver lining, Tsvangirai noted, was new South African president Motlanthe who seemed to understand the larger issue, unlike his predecessor Thabo Mbeki.

¶4. (C) Tsvangirai said progress in completing an agreement was being made difficult by ZANU-PF. ZANU-PF had not made a "paradigm shift" in its attitudes and actions. It continued to treat the MDC as a junior partner and failed to exhibit sincerity in the negotiating process. A symbolic example, explained Tsvangirai, was its failure to give him a passport.

¶5. (C) Complicating matters, added Tsvangirai, was the facilitator Mbeki. Throughout the negotiations, Mbeki had always treated ZANU-PF as the ruling party, and had ignored the fact that the MDC had won the March elections. Therefore, Mbeki, as facilitator, had placed little pressure on ZANU-PF.

SADC Extraordinary Summit

¶6. (C) Tsvangirai said the SADC Extraordinary Summit, as recommended by the Troika after the breakdown of talks on October 28, would take place within a couple of weeks, probably in South Africa. SADC had no power, other than moral suasion, but the MDC would direct its efforts toward the Summit. To this end, he planned to visit Botswana, South Africa, and possibly Tanzania next week (on an Emergency Travel Document). Other MDC officials would fan out around Africa. Tsvangirai averred it was important to have AU regional leaders attend the Summit since the AU was a guarantor of the September 15 agreement. He thought

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Tanzanian president Kikwete, as head of the AU and president of a SADC country, was key to making this happen.

¶7. (C) The Ambassador asked how the U.S. could be helpful. Tsvangirai suggested the USG talk to each SADC head of state; explain that the issue is not allocation of ministries, but commitment of ZANU-PF to treat the MDC as equals in a genuine power-sharing government; and emphasize that SADC's credibility is at stake.

Tsvangirai Holding Firm

¶8. (C) Perhaps realizing the error of his ways in signing an incomplete agreement on September 15, Tsvangirai promised to hold firm and not give in to either ZANU-PF or SADC and sign a bad agreement. He noted he had been traveling in Zimbabwe and that the Zimbabwean people, despite hardships, were solidly behind him. He also joked that he had to deal with "hawks" among his advisors who made any compromise difficult.

¶9. (C) The Ambassador expressed his support of Tsvangirai and the MDC and acknowledged the humanitarian problems that are so troubling to the MDC. He told Tsvangirai he intended to personally request a letter from Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ) governor Gideon Gono to allow NGOs to use forex throughout Zimbabwe, thus freeing up their assistance efforts.

Sanctions for the RBZ

¶10. (C) The Ambassador asked Tsvangirai if new sanctions would hurt his negotiating position or if they would have an effect on ZANU-PF and its willingness to negotiate. Tsvangirai replied that sanctions had already had their effect and that new sanctions were relatively unimportant. The one exception, Tsvangirai emphasized, would be sanctions on the RBZ which could have a devastating effect on ZANU-PF.

Action Request

¶11. (C) We suggest that the Department consider a demarche to SADC heads of state to 1) Emphasize the importance of the Extraordinary Summit and that SADC is uniquely positioned to help resolve the Zimbabwean crisis; 2) Suggest that the AU, as a guarantor of the agreement, be invited to attend; and 3) Explain that the issue to be resolved is not mere allocation of ministries, but genuine power-sharing that involves inter alia an equitable distribution of ministries, sharing of governorships, and agreement on a constitutional amendment that will encapsulate the September 15 agreement and allow a government to work.

COMMENT

¶12. (C) Tsvangirai was less upbeat than when we have seen him on recent occasions and he has predicted a deal would be signed. We agree with him that ZANU-PF has not changed and is not sincere about an agreement. While we cannot be optimistic that SADC at its Summit will pressure Mugabe, SADC is the only game in town at this time. Therefore, we should discreetly encourage SADC and the AU to play more constructive roles than they have in the past. In particular, and following up on Tsvangirai's comments, we

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should to the extent possible reach out to Motlanthe.

MCGEE